

CYPRUS INNOVATION AND INSPIRATION

Cyprus is the third-largest island in the Mediterranean and is a land with a long and rich history and proud heritage. Its people possess many traditional skills but have also adapted to change and grasped new opportunities demonstrating their innovation.

The power of the sun

Enfoton Solar Ltd (www.enfotonsolar.com) produced its first polycrystalline solar module in 2003 and has grown rapidly since then.

It was at the beginning of the European PV industry and its initial manufacturing capacity of 1MW is now 60MW. Co-operation with the industry's best has been core to their philosophy in their quest to be both a leading solar panel manufacturer and to have the very highest quality, using cutting-edge techniques. From 2003 to 2010, the business turnover has risen by an average of 84% per year with the figure for 2010 at €85m and a production level of over 228,000 pieces.

Enfoton was started by four family related partners. They pride themselves on the strength of their manufacturing warranty and a tour of the factory indicates the investment made in both staff and equipment to ensure very high standards – a reason for their substantial growth in sales. Some 98% of total production is exported. While the main markets are in Europe – chiefly Germany, Italy, France and Greece – they are diversifying much further afield. While any business must focus on financial return, their aim is firmly to build a reputation for highly efficient panels of consistent quality. Their factory process is also strong on both recycling and efficiency in all aspects.

In 2008, Enfoton received an award in the category 'Best European Union Exporter for Exports per capita' – their second time of winning. As well as producing industry leading panels, Enfoton undertakes the complete redesign and installation of photovoltaic systems whether for domestic application or in commercial uses. Tassos Roussos, marketing and sales director, believes the business has much more to offer and confirms that Enfoton will continue to be cutting-edge in its development and to invest accordingly. As their promotion material states 'Solar Energy...is our business'.



Enfoton

Play to invent

Engino (www.engino.com) is a versatile three-dimensional construction toy. The design of parts allows connectivity of up to six sides simultaneously, while the innovative extendable components lead to builds that were previously impossible in a toy of this kind, seeking to maximise children's creativity and imagination. It uses very few parts but allows a very wide range of model build including angles. It has already received many honours including the most innovative toy award 2010 at Toy Russia.

The toy is the brainchild of Costas Sisamos who trained as a mechanical engineer before becoming a teacher. In their lessons in design and technology, he sought ways for his pupils to learn about pulleys, gears and the many aspects of construction. He set to work to design his own educational teaching aid, starting in wood and then moving to plastic and, from this, Engino was born and has subsequently been extended and added to in range and possibilities. While a toy suiting a wide age range, its core purpose is to help young people build technical models easily and creatively, with the educational advantage of them experimenting and learning about technology.

Engino Net Ltd has quickly developed its sales with currently some 90% exported to such countries as Taiwan, Korea, Russia and the UK. However, Costas is very aware of the need to further develop the brand and increase its visibility and promotion. He is keen to state that, while this may be a product in a similar space to Lego, it is not directly competing. It is a different toy and he again emphasises its purpose – to be fun but also educational. From the first product launch in 2007, Engino has already proved a great success and, now with a comprehensive range of model is in place, is poised to substantially increase its sales.



Engino

Fast lighting charcoal

Anyone who likes to barbecue will know the challenges of lighting the coals and the time that it can take for it to heat up ready for cooking. Soteris Andreou, a very experienced and successful engineer, certainly recognised this and set about inventing the solution. The result is the production of self-lighting charcoal, which is now marketed, together with a disposable barbecue grill, by his Limassol based family company, Advanced Coal BBE Ltd (www.advanced-coal.com).

What makes this so different is best seen by demonstration. Lighting the grill by a pre-placed fuse – also their invention – shows the coals smoking for about a minute or so before dying down. In a further three minutes, the coals are warm and ready to cook and will stay at a constant temperature for over two hours. A further factor is the lack of flames. It is certainly innovative and Advanced Coal claim that nothing similar exists currently on the market. It is also fully certified to DIN EN 1860 - 2:2005, ISO 9001/14001.

The secret is in the quality of charcoal used together with the process of producing the briquettes, including a set of secret ingredients of course. The full product range includes the Easy Grill just described, Easy Briquettes and Easy Auto Briquettes. The latter is again a unique product of their patent where all that is needed is a match or contact with an already heated briquette and they light within minutes with no need for fuel. As Alexandros Andreou, marketing manager, says: "We believe these are revolutionary products. Our mission is to make barbecue lovers lives easier wherever they are." They are widely available in Cyprus and export markets already include Greece, Russia, Germany, Qatar, Israel and Iceland.



Advanced Coal

The Lazar Organic Cosmetic Collection, introduced just over three years ago, is 100% natural and, although based on techniques developed over many years, truly innovative. The range comprises face and skin products as well as hair treatments. Not for this business expensive packaging, just simply presented products of the highest quality. For example, a popular face product comprises oils from organic cultivated avocado and shea butter as well as extracted phytoestrogens. The composition helps to reduce ageing,

wrinkles, redness, roughening and tired skin in a natural regenerative way.

Currently 90% of their organic cosmetic range goes for export with their primary markets in Russia, Switzerland, Germany and the UK. They are pioneers in a traditional industry and their priority is high standards asserting that no other herb farm has the range of qualified people in all aspects. They have their own laboratory and work with a network of specialists fully testing all their products. To meet growing demand, they have a network of other farms growing herbs under their management systems. They are a family business with distinction.



Lazar Organic Cosmetics

The innovation of Cyprus

These are tremendous examples of innovation and development in Cyprus. Despite the economic situation impacting across Europe, there is a spirit of optimism among the business community and a belief that Cyprus has

Naturally best

Filaktis Lazarou of S.J.M. Lazarou Ltd (www.cyprusherbs.com.cy), is passionate about herbs, their growing and especially uses for health and well being. He runs the business side of very much a family concern with his grandparents and his mother all involved. Indeed his mother, a botanist, started the herb farm and it is one of the biggest in Cyprus. In 2009, they opened Lazar Gardens where visitors can freely

much to offer in terms of developing and marketing retail products for export. There is a real sense of entrepreneurship with a breadth of activity and inventiveness.

These four businesses illustrate that Cyprus is a land with highly inventive and industrious people and a proud heritage – without doubt, a place to watch. For further information about products from Cyprus please visit www.cyprustrade.com.